



Science Student Success Centre
Strategic Plan (17/18):
Supporting Science Students
in Achieving Their Goals





Introduction

The Science Student Success Centre (SSSC) offers specialized support to undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science. This Strategic Plan for the SSSC summarizes the centre's goals from 2017 through 2018, which derive from the following themes and ideas found in Carleton University's Strategic Integrated Plan 2013-2018 (SIP-13-18): Collaboration, Leadership and Resilience: Sustainable Communities – Global Prosperity:

Theme 3: Carleton University will be nationally and internationally known for being student centred, linking its academic endeavours and student supports to empower students as productive and engaged citizens in an increasingly diverse world.

Goal 3-1: To ensure the employability and future success of our students through experiential learning, engagement, innovative teaching and holistic support services.

Theme 4: Carleton University will be known as a university that nurtures leadership, encourages innovation, recognizes achievement and embraces sustainability.

Goal 4-1: To pursue organizational excellence by building leadership capacity and through the continuous improvement of our academic and administrative processes.

Mission

The Science Student Success Centre helps all undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science define and achieve their academic, career, and social goals.

Vision

The Science Student Success Centre is the student hub of the Faculty of Science. It connects students with each other, with faculty and staff, and with professionals who have careers related to degree programs in the Faculty of Science. At the core of the SSSC is the belief that a positive university experience is deeply rooted in developing strong one-on-one relationships and continuing successes. All programming in the SSSC is designed to encourage

relationship building and personal growth through the sharing of knowledge. Peer mentoring is the primary vehicle that the SSSC uses to accomplish the collective transference of knowledge and skills from one Faculty of Science student to another.

The SSSC fills gaps in support for undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science by actively listening to students, faculty, staff, and the SSSC student volunteer team, and then creating and maintaining programming that addresses the specific needs of Faculty of Science students. By utilizing its location in the Faculty of Science, the SSSC continuously evolves and anticipates the needs of students to provide timely, up-to-date support.

The SSSC team is built upon a volunteer funding model where staff employees and student volunteers function as a single unit. Top students in the Faculty of Science join the SSSC team and are held to the highest possible standards of professionalism and integrity. Student team members are challenged to accept ownership of the SSSC – to take creative risks, collaborate, lead, and push their limits in order to positively impact the lives of individuals and the Faculty of Science community as a whole.

Values

- Communication: placing students' needs and desires first
- Inclusivity: a safe environment that fosters trust and autonomy
- Growth: constantly striving for improvement
- Collaboration: leveraging collective genius

Themes

1. Academic Success
2. Career Development
3. Community Engagement





Theme 1: Academic Success

The SSSC's academic mandate is to provide supplemental learning opportunities that are Faculty of Science specific and applicable to two or more majors within the Faculty of Science while also providing opportunities for undergraduate students to acquire the basic skillsets needed to be academically successful within the Faculty.

GOAL 1-1: PROVIDE ACADEMIC SUPPORT AS FIRST-YEAR FACULTY OF SCIENCE STUDENTS TRANSITION INTO UNIVERSITY

Strategic Actions

- Provide peer mentoring for incoming first-year Faculty of Science students throughout their first year beginning with Summer Matchup and continuing through the Early Warning Initiative
- Continue offering Math Matters to provide supplemental math support to incoming students
- Work with OIRP to assess the long-term effectiveness of Summer Matchup, the Early Warning Initiative and Math Matters
- Meet with academic units within the Faculty to review and reassess workshops that supplement course content in the first year
- Improve the First-Year Representative program by allowing First-Year Representatives to complete a survey to receive feedback about the hiring, training and the integration of their team into the SSSC; ensure that the First-Year Representative team plan is documented for use in future years

Key Performance Measures

- 20% of all first-year students in the Faculty participate in the mentorship program
- 50% of all first-year students who receive mentoring return during the school year for additional mentoring sessions
- Metrics established and programming changes to Summer Matchup, the Early Warning Initiative, and Math Matters made based on in-depth data analysis
- SSSC workshops modified to align with current course content
- Feedback from First-Year Representatives showing that they feel sufficiently integrated into and supported by the SSSC

GOAL 1-2: OFFER SUPPLEMENTAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING THAT AIDS IN INCREASING UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATION RATES WITHIN THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Strategic Actions

- Review the effectiveness of including second-year Faculty of Science students in the Early Warning Initiative
- Continue training peer mentors to create sustainable relationships with mentees that encourage mentor-mentee connections throughout upper years
- Meet with academic units within the Faculty to review and reassess workshops that supplement course content in upper years
- Play a leadership role in the collection of undergraduate graduation rates, needs assessments related to this data, and the development of a retention strategy for the Faculty of Science
- Conduct a review of supplemental academic support programs for upper-year Faculty of Science students to assess their financial sustainability in times of budgetary plateau

Key Performance Measures

- Second-year inclusion in the Early Warning Initiative grounded in data
- Mentors complete all training modules and two one-on-one mock mentoring session assessments with Science Student Success Centre staff members
- SSSC workshops modified to align with current course content and reviewed for relevance and usefulness
- SSSC staff included in Dean's Office, faculty-wide, and university-wide meetings about increasing graduation rates and supporting upper-year students
- Upper-year supplemental academic support programs within the Faculty are justifiable and maintainable
- Areas identified where increased unit-level support could be implemented



Theme 2: Career Development

The SSSC recognizes that all units within the university have roles to play in helping students prepare for employment after graduation. The SSSC also considers the development of its professional team to be of the utmost importance and is committed to offering opportunities for personal and professional growth.

GOAL 2-1: CAREER EXPLORATION AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic Actions

- Continue to host four major events throughout the year: the Science Student Alumni Mixer, Med Night, the Computer Science Industry Mixer, and the Science Networking Forum
- Continue to provide information about career paths available to students completing degrees in the Faculty of Science
- Assess Kick-Start into Science as a possible avenue to begin career development awareness in the first year of university
- Continue offering support, information, workshops and events for students interested in attending medical, dental, optometry, veterinary or pharmacy school
- Meet with units within the Faculty of Science to identify career exploration and networking needs that the SSSC could support

Key Performance Measures

- Increase partnerships to grow and further develop SSSC events
- Create a section on the SSSC website dedicated to career exploration including resume and CV examples for science and technology careers, and links to resources such as Student Academic and Career Development Services
- Create and post a series of videos related to attending pre-professional schools and update the SSSC website to improve navigability to this section by September 2017
- Needs of individual units identified and addressed

GOAL 2-2: LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

Strategic Actions

- Continue to provide assessment opportunities for SSSC team members to identify their personal characteristics and marketable skillsets
- Continue training team members on skills such as goal setting, scheduling, and time management so that they can pass along the knowledge to mentees
- Create leadership modules for SSSC team coordinators
- Update the SSSC website linking to multiple resources to help Faculty of Science students assess their skills and career opportunities
- Expand the SSSC website to include information on creating science or technology specific CVs or resumes
- Provide a resume review for all SSSC team members

Key Performance Measures

- Feedback from the SSSC team confirming increased self-awareness
- Mentors receive 4.85 out of 5.0 in the area of “received information on how to be successful” on the mentee feedback form
- Increased performance of team leaders in facilitating small groups, resolving conflicts, and delegating
- Increased use of the careers section of the SSSC website demonstrated through Google Analytics
- Feedback from Faculty of Science students about the usefulness of the CV and resume section of the website

GOAL 2-3: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic Actions

- Continue to grow and expand Science Lab Tour Week to help students find out about opportunities to participate in on-campus research
- Continue to hold the DSRI workshop to assist students with writing DSRI applications
- Provide additional assistance to students applying for NSERC-USRAs on the SSSC website
- Add new workshops to help students with their applications to any new Faculty of Science sponsored awards
- Update the SSSC website to better connect Faculty of Science students with clubs, societies, and other opportunities for involvement within the Faculty
- Create a blog of experiential learning opportunities for Faculty of Science students that includes testimonials about local, Canada-wide, and international opportunities

Key Performance Measures

- Increased participation in Science Lab Tour Week by researchers and students
- Students who participate in the DSRI workshop receive an award more often than students who do not attend the workshop
- Increased traffic on the careers section of the SSSC website as shown on Google Analytics demonstrating the usefulness of NSERC-USRA information
- Increased traffic on the involvement section of the SSSC website as shown on Google Analytics demonstrating students' ability to connect with extracurricular activities
- Blog created and blog posts promoted on social media throughout the school year

GOAL 2-4: SKILL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Strategic Actions

- Encourage SSSC staff members to participate in learning and professional development workshops offered by Carleton and programs such as Carleton Leader and Fierce Conversations
- At least one SSSC staff member attends a relevant conference or external training opportunity each year
- Work with the Assistant Dean of Science to identify further opportunities for growth for SSSC staff members both inside and outside the Faculty of Science

Key Performance Measures

- Staff members able to make positive changes to SSSC programming based on increased awareness and knowledge of Carleton, the student services profession, and leadership in general
- Each SSSC staff member involved in one or more activities related to building leadership capacity as a student support professional



Theme 3: Community Engagement

Students within the Faculty of Science have broad majors and interests and the SSSC aims to be a tie that connects the Faculty. Through collaboration with units and instructors within the Faculty, and by working to strengthen partnerships within the university, the SSSC can help students build relationships and navigate the university environment more easily.

GOAL 3-1: DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FIRST YEAR

Strategic Actions

- Refine the Kick-Start into Science series to further meet the needs and desires of incoming first-year Faculty of Science students
- Continue to offer peer mentoring opportunities through Summer Matchup and the Early Warning Initiative
- Provide social events and community service activities that allow Faculty of Science students to participate and give back
- Assess Summer Matchup mentor training for effectiveness
- Assess the impact of Kick-Start into Science on Summer Matchup and make changes that ensure the success of both programs
- Review attendance of social and community service activities; examine the impact of these activities on our student population and make changes as needed

Key Performance Measures

- Increased Kick-Start into Science attendance, improved participant feedback, and more consistent feedback from Kick-Start Coordinators
- Increased involvement in peer mentoring activities by first and second-year students
- Increase of Summer Matchup students participating in mentoring during the school year
- Social and community service activities modified based on data

GOAL 3-2: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Strategic Actions

- Create a plan to better communicate the SSSC's mission, vision and activities
- Host a discussion with the Science Dean's Office and departmental administrators to assess the avenues in which to best communicate with students in the Faculty of Science
- Work with individual units within the Faculty to support community building efforts
- Meet with on-campus partners to discuss ways in which we can best work together to support students in the Faculty of Science

Key Performance Measures

- Feedback about SSSC communication strategies received from partners, communication plan created and initiated, and metrics for assessing the SSSC's communication plan created and implemented
- SSSC mandate, strategic plan, and statistics added to the SSSC website
- All SSSC handouts and subject guides reviewed and updated
- Increased awareness from faculty and staff of SSSC mandates demonstrated by increased participation levels of faculty, staff and students in SSSC activities
- Decrease of incorrect referrals to the SSSC from other units on campus